



NATIONAL POTATO COUNCIL

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October 22, 2003

Food Guide Reassessment Team
USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
3101 Park Center Drive
Room 1034
Alexandria, VA 22302

Dear Food Guide Reassessment Team,

On behalf of the National Potato Council, I am writing in response to the request from the Center for Nutrition Policy, USDA, for comments on the proposed daily intake patterns and technical support documents supporting the dietary guidelines. The National Potato Council represents more than 95 percent of the potato growers in the United States. Potatoes have a farm gate value of more than \$3.5 billion dollars a year and this is increased substantially through processing. The National Potato Council welcomes the opportunity to comment and appreciates your consideration of our recommendations.

We applaud your efforts to provide Americans with guidance on healthy eating. The Pyramid is an innovative tool for representing the elements necessary for building a healthy diet. Regrettably the public has not noticeably changed eating habits to comply with the Pyramid guidelines. We feel that the 2005 revisions offer an opportunity to make adjustments that clearly show American consumers how to incorporate a healthy diet into their lifestyle, which should also include appropriate physical activity and exercise.

It is essential that the importance of physical activity be included in all materials distributed to consumers. Given the high rate of obesity resulting largely from the sedentary lifestyles of many Americans, it is important that the emphasis is placed on balancing food consumption and exercise for a healthy lifestyle. In assigning target calorie levels according to physical activity levels it is essential the terms "sedentary," "low active" and "active" are clearly defined for both males and females. Consumer perceptions can vary and must be clearly defined to ensure they are interpreted correctly.

While it is important for Daily Intake Patterns to be made available to health professionals, distribution to consumers could cause confusion. Information for distribution to health professionals should also include information on target exercise levels for each age group. Health professional can relay this information to consumers.

Increasing vegetable consumption should be key objective of the guideline revisions. Consumption of fresh or processed vegetables which are rich in vitamins and minerals is

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the best way to meet the recommended daily allowances of important nutrients. The patterns in Table 1, categorizing the different types of vegetables, may also cause confusion for consumers who already fall far short of eating recommended amounts of vegetables. This may cause confusion among consumers regarding the types of vegetables they should be consuming, when in actuality all vegetables contribute to maintaining a healthy diet. If sub-groupings are used, however, we strongly recommend that "starchy" be defined for consumers so the high nutritional content of vegetables in this category is clear. A medium-sized potato alone offers 45 percent of Daily Value of vitamin C, 21 percent of potassium, 12 percent of dietary fiber, 10 percent of B6 and 9 percent carbohydrate. Attached you will find a comparison of various vegetables for select micronutrients content. It is clear from this comparison that potatoes can make a strong contribution to the needed micronutrient intake for consumers. It must be clear to American consumers that the potato possesses strong nutritional benefits and that they are an important part of the vegetable category.

Appropriate serving size varies with each food item and perceptions of typical serving sizes vary among consumers. It is likely that consumers are confused as to what an actual serving size is. We believe a number of factors lead to this confusion and result in part in the large portions being served in restaurants and homes across America. Therefore, it is highly important that serving sizes be expressed in understandable terms such as cups or ounces, or even in relation to familiar objects. For example, a serving of potatoes can be described as 5 1/3 ounces, or a medium-sized potato or the size of a computer mouse.

In illustrative food patterns for consumer materials, levels of physical activity needed for each group along with caloric intake should be clearly defined. As mentioned previously, the tie-in between food consumption and exercise should be highlighted in all materials distributed to both health professionals and consumers.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. If you would like additional information on the nutritional value of potatoes, please feel free to notify me directly.

Sincerely,



John Keeling
Executive Vice President and CEO

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**Vegetable Comparison of
Select micronutrients important for WIC participants**

	Potato - 1 medium (2-1/4" to 3 1/4" dia. raw) (one serving)	Spinach raw (1 cup) (one serving)	Broccoli (1/2 cup chopped) (one serving)	Carrots raw (1/2 cup chopped) (one serving)
	213 g	30 g	44 g	164 g
Vitamin C - mg	41.96	8.430	39.248	3.776
Vitamin B6 - mg	0.623	0.059	0.077	0.089
Magnesium - mg	43.990	23.700	9.240	7.680
Potassium K - mg	896.730	167.400	139.040	204.800
Folate - mcg	34.080	58.260	27.720	12.160
Calcium - mg	23.560	29.700	20.680	21.120
Iron - mg	1.664	0.813	0.321	0.192

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Food Guide Pyramid Reassessment Team
USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1034
Alexandria, VA 22302

RE: Public Comments on the Food Pyramid Guide

Thank you for seeking public opinion on the Food Pyramid. As the dietary model behind federal food programs, including the National School Lunch Program, the Pyramid needs to evolve with nutrition science.

When the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee convenes to review current policy, I hope they will emphasize the Vegetarian/Vegan Six Food Groups: Whole Grains and Starches, Legumes, Green and Yellow Vegetables, Nuts and Seeds, Fruits, Vitamin and Mineral Foods.

Present guidelines advise two to three daily servings of dairy products along with meat as a main protein source. While this plan successfully promotes the meat and dairy industries, it ignores numerous studies linking saturated fat and cholesterol in meat, eggs, and dairy products with heart disease, cancer and stroke--the top three killers in the U.S.

Dairy products alone are associated with obesity, high blood pressure, juvenile onset diabetes, prostate and breast cancers, allergies, nasal congestion and ear infections, according to the American Heart Association.

One of two Americans will die from heart disease. The excess saturated fat (mostly from animals) and cholesterol (entirely from animals) will be the cause in most cases. The American Dietetic Association claims that vegetarian diets reduce the risk for coronary artery disease, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, colorectal cancer, lung cancer, kidney disease, and obesity.

Children, in particular, deserve alternatives to the fatty fare on school lunch lines. In a 1999 American Heart Association Scientific Sessions report, one in six teenagers' hearts showed significant blockage and the arteries of five-year-olds were clogged with fatty patches. Veggie burgers, soy cold cuts and soy milks are great substitutes for corn dogs, pizzas and milkshakes.

The FDA links contaminated meat goods with six and a half million cases of food poisoning and six thousand deaths every year. Animal-based meals contain residues of growth-inducing hormones and antibiotics. In fact, antibiotic abuse on factory farms has led to what the scientific community labels Super-Bugs-Bacteria. SBB are resistant to current antibiotic therapies.

The Vegetarian/Vegan Six include all the essential carbohydrates, fats, protein, vitamins, minerals and water necessary for a balanced and healthy diet. They also prevent disease and obesity. Please revise the Food Guide Pyramid to reflect vegetarian sources of protein, calcium and other vital nutrients.

Thank you,

Lorraine Nicotera
Lorraine Nicotera

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10/22/03

USDA Center for Nutrition Policy + Promo. 10.14.03

Hello. I have become very interested in the proposed changes concerning The Dietary Food Pyramid, and as an up-and-coming nutritionalist, I truly believe that the existing "Pyramid Scheme" is fairly inconsistent in Dietary Standards on a nutritional standpoint for Americans. ~~IN~~ IN Fact, I believe from the guideline ~~chart~~ CHART about the "actual consumption" of Americans - that it is very much contributing to the weight problem of the men, women, and children of U.S.A.

I believe highly of Alice Lichtenstein's concept of the "New" nutritional approach for Americans, and I can rely on this concept as a beneficial tool for general health - more so than the "Food Pyramid". I feel that the "Pie-Chart" is not only more comprehensible, it further represents a more in-depth method of optimum nutrition that is actually "healthier" than our current outlook.

I am very pleased on the new developments from TUFTS UNIVERSITY in BOSTON. Please keep me informed on any new decisions made concerning this matter. Also please send any and all nutritional literature available to the address enclosed. Thank you for your time.

Send Correspondence to:

Damian J. Greer

POUNDER SPRINGS, GA

Sincerely,


DAMIAN GREER

October 15, 2003

received
10/22/03

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Food Guide Pyramid Reassessment Team
USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1034,
Alexandria, VA 22302.

Dear Reassessment Team:

I am writing to give my comments about how Americans eat and how the food pyramid could be modified. Having been a vegetarian for 22 years and raising my 6 year old twins as vegetarians, I strongly encourage more emphasis being put on eating whole grains, soy products, fruit and vegetables. This should be emphasized more than meat and dairy products given the health problems that have resulted in this country and others when there is such a heavy focus on an animal based diet. By encouraging less consumption of animal products, not only will people's health improve by losing weight, but they can also reduce their risk of cancer and heart disease. In addition, the planet's resources will not be so depleted and contaminated from the continued overproduction of animals for consumption. Finally, there will be less suffering for the animals who live in horrendous conditions before they are slaughtered.

I continue to meet more people who have reduced their consumption of meat or completely eliminated it due to health problems they've had from excess animal products in their diet, and because of the spread of diseases from animals to humans. These diseases have resulted from the inhumane and terrible conditions that these animals live in.

I certainly hope you will consider the issues I've written about and reduce the emphasis on animal products for the future food pyramid. It will be an important step in reducing a lot of suffering for not only living beings, but also the planet itself.

Thank you for your consideration to this matter.

Sincerely,



Deanne Foerster
Alexandria, VA